THE

MORAL TENDENCY

OF THE

DOCTRINE OF FALLING FROM GRACE

EXAMINED.

A Sermon preached before the Synod of Alabama at the opening of its Sessions in Gainesville, October 24th, 1844.

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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF SYNOD,

October 25th, 1844.

"*Resolved*, That the Synod highly approve of the discourse delivered on yesterday, by the Moderator, Rev. J. L. Kirkpatrick, on the subject previously assigned him, and that Rev. F. H. Porter and Rev. R. C. Smith be appointed a committee to request on behalf of the Synod of Alabama a copy for publication."

N. B. It may be proper for the author of the following discourse, to state, that he has availed himself of a permission, understood to have been allowed by the Synod to make, in preparing it for the press, an addition of some matter which was omitted on its delivery, in order not to protract unduly the services of the occasion. The *sixth head* in the sermon, all the Notes and the Appendix have been thus added.

Psalms 11: 3.—"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Religion consists of faith and practice. These stand related to each other as cause and effect. Sin in practice is the result of an error or deficiency in faith. No man was ever entirely right in his conduct, who was wrong in his faith; for, although the specific act, in any given case, may have been correct in its external features and salutary in its immediate results, it was defective as to the prime requisite of virtue—an intelligent design and an adequate motive. The Bible, in exacting faith as a nccessary ingredient of religion, supplies a solid foundation for its support and ample materials for its growth. It reveals certain doctrines as objects of faith; and these are also the sources of the precepts which it inculcates for the regulation of the conduct. Without a correct understanding of the doctrines, and a cordial attachment to them as true, important and necessary, it is impossible to understand fully the precepts, or to appreciate their propriety and value; and the obedience rendered to them, if any there should be, must be a blind, reluctant, unacceptable obedience. In just so far as our views of the doctrines are erroneous or defective, will our obedience be partial and invalid. It follows from this, that to pronounce any opinion erroneous, is to pronounce it "dangerous," and, so far as it may be connected with practice, "demoralizing." The contrary would imply, that error is safe as a matter of faith, and salutary as a rule of conduct. If the opinion, beside being in itself erroneous, involve a denial of some one or more established truths, it becomes additionally "dangerous and demoralizing," to a degree measured by the value, theoretical and practical, of the truths thus nullified.

Every truth is important. Those which God has made known by a special revelation, are of eternal worth. To some, however, a peculiar importance attaches, from the relation which they sustain to other truths, and from the derangement produced, in the whole system of truth, by ab-

stracting them from it. For any thing we can tell, every star that glitters above us, may sustain an important part in that reciprocity and balance of forces, by which regularity and harmonious action are secured to the heavenly bodies, and alternate day and night, seed time and harvest, to our planet. This is not saying, however, that the star which feebly twinkles at a measureless distance, bears so important a relation to us as does the sun, the centre of our system; or, if blotted out, consequences so disastrous to us would ensue as must follow the extinction of the "glorious King of Day," whose immediate beams warm and gladden the earth. There are certain truths which lie *at the foundation* of the christian system of faith and practice. A mistake in regard to these is like a mistake in the groundwork of a building: no subsequent skill, labor or expense can remedy the evil. It will give deformity or insecurity to the entire edifice.

Of such a nature, we must reckon all those doctrines which pertain to the character and perfections of God; those which relate to the completeness and sufficiency of the provisions of the Gospel made through the obedience, death and intercession of Christ; and those, which teach the reality, nature and *thoroughness* of the work produced upon the heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The perfections of the Father, the offices of the Son, the work of the Spirit—these are the "foundations" of our hope, our sanctification, our salvation. Upon these our faith rests. From them, are derived our most authoritative motives for seeking, and our safest rules for securing holiness and heaven. If these be destroyed—if they be disparaged—by any doctrine which we hold, or refuse to hold, "what can the righteous do?" The system of truth taught in the Gospel is assailed in its vital part. It is shorn at once of its beauty and of its strength. And if this be not "dangerous and demoralizing," then it would not be, to take God from the Bible, Christ from the Gospel and the Spirit from the heart.

It is our object to attempt to show that the doctrine of "falling from Grace" tends, among other things, to this result, and, on this account, is to be held as "dangerous and demoralizing." We shall not enter into any argument to prove that the doctrine is contrary to scripture or sound logic, nor to establish the truth of the opposite doctrine of the "Saints' perseverance." *The single point before us is, the tendencies of the former doctrine.*

1. The doctrine of "Falling from Grace" tends to disparage the character of God and to destroy our confidence in His perfections.

It is implied in the doctrine, that one may be, *to-day*, a child of God—born of His Spirit, renewed in the image of His Son, fully pardoned of transgressions, freely justified from all condemnation, adopted into the family of Heaven, made an heir of eternal life, of which he possesses already an indisputable title and a joyful earnest—but, *to-morrow*, may be a child of the Devil, *un*born of the Spirit, wearing no traces of the image of Christ, not pardoned at all, not justified in any part, under sentence of eternal death, ejected from the family of Heaven, disowned, disinherited, an heir of Hell, and tending to perdition. A change, so great and disastrous, God *could* have prevented, or he could *not*. If He could have prevented it, and did not, then we have presented to us the spectacle of God doing, to-day, what, on to-morrow, he permitted to be undone; purposing, one hour, to save a soul and actually beginning the work, and purposing, the next hour, not to save that soul, and actually ceasing from the work; giving, on one day, to his Son, as the reward of the travail of his soul, a prize, which He allows and designs to allow, to be, on the next day, wrested from His Son's grasp; sending, on yesterday, His Spirit to inhabit a heart and "seal it unto the day of redemption," from which, on to-day, He permits the Spirit to be driven and his work obliterated. We ask, if to ascribe such mutability—such quick and facile mutations to the divine purpose, be not to disparage the character of God? Is it not to aim a fatal blow at the foundation of all confidence in his perfections, as an unchangeable, ever constant and faithful God?

But on the supposition, that He could *not* have prevented the change we have instanced, then, we have presented to us, a God undertaking what he cannot accomplish, beginning "to build a tower and not being able to finish it"—a God liable to defeat, subject to disappointment—a vanquished general, a crownless monarch, a broken sceptre, a fallen throne. It is in vain, that any intelligent being is called upon to respect or confide in such a God.

Is it said, that although God possesses the absolute power requisite to uphold, from falling, the subjects of His grace, yet it is not within the power of the *moral means and motives* through which He is pleased to operate? We shall not stop to expose the absurdity of supposing, that

means and motives, which are sufficient to convert the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, are not sufficient to enable the "righteous to hold on his way;" and that it requires greater power to sustain life in those possessing it, than to give it those who have it not. We ask, why does God employ means that are inadequate to the accomplishment of his purposes? Is it because He is ignorant of their inefficiency? or, because He has no other and better means at His command? Are we reduced to the dire necessity of feeling, that we live under the government, and must trust in the perfections of a God, thus ignorant, or thus poor, embarrssed, bankrupt?

Will it be said, that God possesses ample power, and that the means employed are entirely sufficient, but that He has chosen to leave it dependent on our wills and efforts whether we shall persevere in holiness or fall from grace. According to this, God has made Himself dependent on us—His will on our wills, His purposes on our pleasure, His plans on our caprices. Besides, the supposition implies that God has exposed himself to utter defeat and discomfiture, in a matter, in which He has manifested a more intense interest, than in any other of which we have any information. He has undertaken the redemption of the souls of men from sin and hell, and their exaltation to heaven. A work not inferior in magnitude to the creation of the heavens and the earth; one altogether new, strange and marvellous in His government. His intelligent creatures, from every part of the universe, are looking on with the keenest scrutiny and most thrilling anxiety. Upon its success, are staked His own glory, the dignity of His throne and the destinies of untold millions of His moral subjects. Yet, after all, it is extremely uncertain whether He will succeed in His enterprise. He has left its success contingent on the will of frail, inconstant, fallen, sinful man, surrounded by a world of temptation, and assailed by the malice, subtlety and strength of an innumerable company of devils. If men, being such and thus situated, shall remain faithful, then will God succeed: if not, then must He fail; and, however deep the disgrace with which a defeat will cover His character—however lasting and extensive the injury inflicted upon His government, He must bear it. Nor, is it a failure in one case alone, nor in any limited number of cases, to which He is exposed, but, in *every case* and in *all cases*; for, if perseverance unto the end be left contingent on the will of one christian, it is so left, with every christian, and if one may

fall from grace, all may fall— and with them, fall the purposes of God's mercy, discomfitted, disgraced and helpless—a wreck and a ruin, under which the hopes of a world would be crushed, over which angels ought to weep, among which devils may hold their revels.*

Does it not convey a most dishonorable and injurious reflection on the character of God; does it not undermine the very foundation stone of respect and adoration for Him, and of confidence in Him to suppose Him guilty of such weakness or oversight, as to leave his purposes, in the salvation of his people, contingent on so precarious a condition—contingent on a thousand contingencies, the failure of any one of which would produce inevitable defeat? Yet, it is *there* "the doctrine of falling from grace" places them: and in this view, it seems to us impossible to evade the conclusion, that it tends to bring suspicion, distrust and dishonor on His character. In so far as it does this, it must tend to the subversion of all correct faith and holy practice. Religion, which these compose, is founded on our relations to God. Those relations grow out of His character. Our views of His character, must determine our views of the relations, and our views of the relations, will give direction, shape and color to our conduct. *As is our God, so is our religion.* "For all people will walk, every one, in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God forever and ever.

II. The doctrine of "Falling from Grace" tends to disparage the completeness and sufficiency of the offices and works of Christ.

In addressing a christian assembly, it is not required that we should exhibit the vital connection between the offices and works of Christ and the efficacy of the gospel; or, the connection between the gospel, and holiness and salvation. Any sentiment which impeaches the qualifica-

* "The eternal Jehovah waiting in suspense and watching the will of his own creatures, in perfect suspense—incapable of decreeing or acting, until he shall see the action of their wills; and discover which way human plans and events will happen to fall out, and how this princely will shall move and act! The old doctrine of the sun revolving round the earth; or of a universe of worlds rolling round an invisible grain of sand, has nothing in point of absurdity equal to this. Besides, the impiety and atheism of it fill us with horror. The CREATOR waiting in suspense on the creature! Infinite justice, in suspense at the door of the degraded rebel! Omnipotence watching for the deciding movement of imbecile man! Omniscience waiting at the door of ignorance! Infinite wisdom rendered incapable of acting until the folly of man's WILL shall bestir itself! And rebellious dust and ashes regulating the awful sovereignty of the Creator!!"

The foregoing remarks from Dr. Brownlee's 'Christian Youth's Book,' though used in connection with another point of doctrine, are entirely appropriate to the subject under discussion.

tions of Christ as mediator, must necessarily unsettle the foundation, laid in His mediation for our faith, and impair the force of the motives, thence arising, for perfect holiness in conduct. The doctrine before us supposes, that those for whom His blood has been shed, and to whom it has been applied, in their pardon, justification and sanctification, may yet be lost. It supposes that those given Him by his Father, in a covenant such as God may make with God, and which we should conclude must be "ordered in all things and sure," may, nevertheless, be plucked from His hands, or fall from them, or, as it has been expressed by a distinguished advocate of the doctrine, "slip through them and perish." It supposes, that those, unto whom He has been "made for wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" in whom, He has been "formed, the hope of glory;" whose souls have been moulded into His likeness, filled with His spirit and clothed in His righteousness; who have been united to Him, as the branch is to the vine; who are living members of the body, of which He is the living head; for whom, He "intercedes at the right hand of the majesty on high;" whose names are "graven on the palms of His hands," and on whose foreheads He has written His name,—may, after all this, and in despite of all this, He outcasts from heaven, reprobates, accursed, damned. It supposes, that this is actually true of some, and may be true of all. Thus, when, in the councils of eternity, He assumed the office of mediator, it was a matter of doubt whether His mediation would result in the salvation of one soul; and, when His work on earth, achieved through much toil and blood, had been completed, it was left still uncertain, whether it would avail to the salvation of another soul. We say *uncertain*, because, according to the doctrine under notice, the perseverance of any christian in holiness, without which all agree he cannot be saved, is dependant on his own will and efforts. This renders it contingent, and whatever is contingent, is necessarily uncertain; and when we consider the character and condition of the creature, on whose will and efforts it depends, the uncertainty is, not whether all or a great part will persevere, but whether any—so many as one will persevere. Is then the work of Christ complete? Is it *sufficient* for the purposes for which it was designed? Here, at least, is one defect, and a prime defect. *It has no provision infallibly securing success.* It helps not to say, that failure, in any case, is not owing to a deficiency in the provisions of the Gospel, but to the

want of fidelity in the christian. This very supposition implies another defect in the work of Christ—*the want of a provision which will secure the fidelity of the christian.* It might be concluded, that, in framing a scheme of salvation, fully adequate to the necessities of man, every thing required to ensure his continuance in grace would be included and provided for, with as much speciality and certainty as any other want. According to the supposition before us, however, no such provision has been made; and yet it is one essential to the success of the scheme.

Regarding it, in any aspect in which it may be presented, we cannot but insist, that the doctrine charges upon the Redeemer, either inattention, ignorance or weakness; and thus disparages the perfection of His offices and works. It holds up to the view of a sinner, trembling under a conviction of his sins, and crushed beneath the burden of his corruptions, a Savior, able and willing, indeed, to extend *pardon for* his sins, but either not able, or not willing to bestow *grace*, which will certainly give him the *victory over all his corruptions.* Will such a Savior command the profound respect, the adoring reverence, the undoubting confidence, the ardent love, the overflowing gratitude of the heart? Can we embrace Him as *only* Savior, *all*-sufficient Savior, for all purposes and in all times, Savior; in whom, *alone*, we are to trust, upon whom, in *all* things, we must rely, to whom, all the honor of our salvation is to be ascribed? Or, is it a Savior in part only, that we behold; who bestows a part only of the blessings we need; supplies merely the deficiences in our efforts, and may fail to supply even these; willing to do his part, if we are willing to do our part; faithful to his engagements, if we are faithful to our duties; and with whom, when—if it shall, indeed, be thus with any—we shall have safely passed the dangers of this world, we are to share the glory of our deliverance from sin and hell? A representation of Christ, which would thus awaken suspicion of the completeness and sufficiency of his offices and works, we hesitate not to pronounce, "dangerous and demoralizing"—dangerous, because it will drive the soul from Christ instead of attracting it to Him; "demoralizing," because it would weaken the force of our obligations, to love Him with all the heart and serve Him with all our powers, as the Savior from whom all efficiency and all success must come.

III. The doctrine of "Falling from Grace" tends to disparage the work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of christians.

The arguments already used with reference to the character of the Father and the offices of the Son, apply, in their general tenor, to the work of the Spirit. All evangelical christians receive it, as a truth of the Bible, that the Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers; and that the objects of His inhabitation, are to strengthen them against temptation, prevent their apostacy, seal them unto the day of redemption, impart to them foretastes of the joys above, and carry on, to complete sanctification, the work of grace begun at their conversion. It cannot be doubted, without a denial of His divine character, that he is fully *able* to accomplish these objects in *every case*. To say, that he *will* not keep, unto salvation, those whom He has regenerated, is to say, that He who has begun a good work will *not* "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" but that—His mind altered, His purposes changed—He leaves his Undertaking half completed, and suffers that, which has been effected, to be sacrificed and lost, for want of a little more attention and labor. The materials, for a magnificent palace, have been collected, the rubbish removed, the foundations dug deep and laid strong, the walls have risen, the capstone has been hewn, and is now ready to be brought forth amid the glad shouts of angels and of saints, when the divine Architect, through whose agency it was commenced and has advanced thus nigh to completion, for some cause, it is not known what, deserts the labor of years, the object of much affection, solicitude and expense, and designed to be an eternal monument of his power, goodness and glory—to be buffeted by the storms of the world, levelled, demolished, trampled down and triumphed over by Satan and his angels. We cannot conceive of any cause which would induce the Spirit to forsake the christian, which did not operate with equal, or greater force, to prevent His converting the same man when a sinner. So that we are driven to the alternative of supposing, either that He undertook what He could not execute, or that He desists from His own work through mere caprice and inconstancy of purpose. Is He the comforter we need and look for, if thus liable to be baffled in His efforts, or diverted from His objects? Who will venture, with such views of His character, to commit, with full faith and glad an-

ticipations, the keeping of the soul's mighty interests to his guardianship and fidelity.*

Having in view our helplessness and dependence on the Spirit, we must regard and declare as "dangerous," the doctrine which tends, in any degree, to impair our confidence in Him as sanctifier, guide and guardian: and, as, to the extent that our confidence in Him is impaired, will we seek other aids and rely upon other resources than His presence and power, so we must regard and declare that doctrine as "demoralizing."

There is, however, another way in which the doctrine tends to disparage the work of the Spirit. *It encourages the disposition, most prevalent among men, both in the Church and out of it, to entertain low, inadquate views of conversion or the new birth.* Its advocates may, with respect to the point before us, be divided into two classes. Those who deny that there is any other change implied in conversion, than that involved in the change of a man's speculative opinions, and in the reformation of his external conduct. It is quite a convenience to these, to have the doctrine of "falling from grace" appended to such a notion of conversion: for when they are confronted with the numerous and every day recurring cases, of persons converted, or, at least, *made christians* "after this sort," who evince no permanent change in their opinions and no real amendment in their conduct, they can account for the fact under the sweeping conclusion that such persons have "fallen from grace."—Without this doctrine to retreat to, they would be compelled, by the mere brunt of invincible facts, to surrender their unscriptural, dangerous and demoralizing views of conversion. Others, holding the doctrine, make conversion an *excitement of the impulses and passions* of the heart, rather than a *change* of its deep-seated *affections, motives and desires.*—Religion, as existing in the soul, is supposed to be a matter of feeling more than of principle. Regeneration is the joint product of human effort and divine aid, of the reality of which, the clearest evidence is looked for, in the amount of animal or nervous sensibility that may be

* "Armenianism represents God's Spirit as if he acted like the guard of a stage coach, who sees passengers safe out of town for a few miles: and, then making his bow, leaves them to pursue the rest of their journey themselves. But divine grace does not thus deal with God's travellers. It accompanies them to their journey's end, and without aid, so that the meanest pilgrim in zion may shout, with David, in full certainty of faith, 'surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever!'" [*Toplady's Free Will and Merit Examined.*

exhibited. Especially, if the subject himself express a high degree of confidence in the change, its reality is placed beyond all doubt; and that, without any regard or enquiry as to the *source* of the confidence—whether it may not have sprung from ignorance of the heart, or of the terms of salvation; from a natural mobility of feeling; or, from the efforts, so frequently and so fatally employed, by which the sympathies and emotions are lashed into a tempest of phrenzied action, and the mind, bewildered and distracted amid the storm, is rendered utterly incapable of deciding, with judgment and accuracy, any thing as to its operations or experience.

We are bringing no railing accusation, but uttering what every one knows, when we declare, that there are multitudes of conversions, so called, occurring every year that do not withstand one year's temptations. The estimate is as favorable as the most enlarged charity can demand, to say, that one half of the reported subjects of them, give evidence within that period, that they are not then *in grace*; and, were it not for the facility in accounting for their being *out of grace*, by the doctrine of "*falling from grace*," *they might be* convinced, and others *would* be convinced, that they never had been regenerated by the Spirit of God—they would learn, and others would learn, that the mere "foam and froth" of feeling are not religion; and, that the evidence of conversion is not to be found in the noise that may be made, nor in the confidence that may be expressed. So strong, however, is the tendency in human nature, to form low views, and rely upon slight evidence of conversion, that we despair of its being corrected, so long as it is furnished with so ready an excuse and direct encouragement, as are provided in the popular doctrine of "falling from grace." Strike down this central pillar, and what a multitude of ill-formed notions, unscriptural evidences, spurious hopes and fatal delusions in regard to conversion, would fall with it—a shapeless mass of irrecoverable ruins!

Let it be observed also, that a mistake in regard to the reality of a work of conversion—and, in nothing is a mistake more easily made—is one that is rarely corrected. Many enter the church unconverted; few of these are ever converted. Those, who think that they were once converted and have fallen from grace, if brought again to seek their salvation, are satisfied, if they can experience a repetition of the feelings which they had at the time of their former supposed conversion. Thus, they are

a second time deluded; and if, as frequently occurs, they find it necessary to be converted for the third or fourth time, or even oftener, it is still a conversion, after the model of the first, which they seek and rely upon. Having been deluded then, they are deluded still. What intelligent christian can fail to see, in a doctrine, which upholds such low, unscriptural views of the great work of conversion unto God, through the power of the Holy Ghost, a tendency both "dangerous and demoralizing?"*

Our objections, however, to the doctrine before us are not confined to the injustice it does to the several persons of the Holy Trinity, and to the reflex influence of the views of the divine character it inculcates upon both faith and practice. Its more DIRECT EFFECTS upon these, we think no less injurious. We therefore observe—

IV. The doctrine of "Falling from Grace" tends to disparage the great incentives to holy obedience presented in the Gospel, by giving the precedence to others which are less suitable and efficient.

The great incentives which the Gospel holds forth to stimulate to obedience, are *gratitude and love*. "We love Him because He first loved us"—shows the origin of these affections. "If ye love me keep my commandments"—is the injunction of our Savior to his disciples, delivered under circumstances which give peculiar solemnity and interest to every word which He uttered. "The love of Christ constraineth us," is the apostle's justification of himself and his christian brethren, for all the labor, sacrifices, reproaches and sufferings endured in the service of God.

* The writer would feel that he had done a good service to the cause of Christ, if he could succeed in directing a special attention to the subject above introduced. To say nothing of the numbers who are accredited as members of the church and yet give no satisfactory evidence of piety, the numbers abounding in every part of the country, who have *been members*, but are now without even a decent seriousness in regard to religion—some of them avowed unbelievers in its reality—others bitter and unscrupulous enemies of its institutions, and all exhibiting a peculiar *shyness* and seeming dread of placing themselves within its influences—furnish occasion for the most painful reflections and call imperiously upon all who love the souls of their fellow men for the most vigorous measures in correcting the evil.—The most impracticable and hopeless cases with which the minister of the Gospel has to deal, are those of persons who have been once or oftener, members of the church, and when one is observed to possess an unusual hostility to the gospel, or to be apparently anxious to distinguish himself for his recklessness in sin, the question which seems naturally to present itself, first, to the mind is—how often has the man been in the church? Among the causes of this alarming evil, we may enumerate, (in connection with the *great source* of it, viz:—low, inadequate views of conversion,) the facility afforded for an inconsiderate admission into the church,—loose notions of the obligations involved in a connection with it—the advantages taken of an excited state of the feelings to induce persons to enter it,—the desire to swell the number of *reported members*—and, the unscriptural, cruel, ruinous practice of receiving into it persons who make no professions of a change of heart.

By this—for the two affections are so nearly related as to be almost identical—is the christian animated in his toils, sustained under discouragements, propelled through dangers. It is this that gives him courage, activity, strength, fortitude, perseverance and victory. No motive is so noble in itself, none so ennobling to the subject; none so uniform in its operation, or mighty in its influence. None partakes so largely of the spirit of Christ, none so radiant with the beauties of heaven. By it the angels are winged in their untiring course of glad obedience, and, by it we are to be fitted for fellowship with them in office and bliss. Injury, deep and lasting to christian character, must be the result of giving any other consideration the precedence of this. And, yet, to such result the doctrine of "falling from grace," it appears to us, has an inherent and inevitable tendency.

The leading incentives to obedience, which it offers, are the *reward* to be secured by obedience, and the *punishment* attached to disobedience—appealing, thus, to the *love of self*, rather than to the *love of Christ*, and to our *fears*, instead of our *gratitude*. That it is proper, under some circumstances and to a certain extent, to appeal to the self-love and fears of men, we promptly admit. These, however, are motives better adapted to the unrenewed, upon whom no higher considerations can be brought to act, than to the christian, in whom the "love of God abideth." Self-love and fear are principles of action with the *slave*. It is not by appealing to these, that the reverence, affection and constant obedience of the *child* are to be gained.

We do not say, that the doctrine of "falling from grace" addresses *exclusively* these principles, but *prominently* and *mainly;* and in so far as it does this, the effect must be injurious. The great efficacy of the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the saints, as an incentive to obedience, is to be found in the power with which it grasps the principle of divine love in the renewed heart, and wakes and stirs into life and activity the kindred affection of gratitude lying there. The more we feel that God has done for us, and the more we feel that He will certainly do for us, the brighter the flame of love that burns in the bosom, and the quicker and stronger its pulsations of gratitude. It needs no argument to prove, that the more active these affections are, the more earnest, constant and successful will be our efforts, to do his will, and be like Him. The doctrine of falling from grace, the opposite of this, must have a con-

trary effect upon these principles of action or motives to obedience.—Under its influence the soul, instead of being turned toward Christ, and made to draw its incentives, encouragement and vigor from Him, is turned upon itself, and directed, from a view of its own interests and dangers, to gather resolution and strength for perseverance in holiness. Instead of being *wooed* on its way by the constraining accents of love, it is *driven* by the harsh denunciations of fear. For the obedience, which is itself but the spontaneous, warm, irrepressible gushings of a bosom swelling with its own grateful emotions, there is substituted a servile truckling, exacted under the lash. Now, as we believe that love is a holier principle, more stable too, and efficacious, than fear, and that gratitude is a more refined, generous and elevating affection, than self-love; and as we are constrained to believe, that the doctrine of falling from grace makes its first and most forcible appeals to the latter, so we must believe, that it tends to disparage the former, and, therefore, to the extent it does this, it cannot but be "dangerous and demoralizing."

V. The doctrine under notice, tends to disparage the only proper source of perseverance in holiness, and to direct the mind to other dependencies & supports.

We have just spoken of the *incentives* to obedience. We now speak of the *source* of obedience. This, we have no hesitation in affirming, is the unchangeable love, and the free, sovereign, unmerited and unaided grace of God. But the doctrine which we are examining would bring in, as an efficient part of the provision, our own wills, vigilance and fidelity. God grants assistance, but the constancy of that assistance depends upon the constancy of our efforts. His grace is employed, not in securing our fidelity, but in blessing that fidelity after it exists. It is not "*preventing*," but *succeeding* grace—not grace going before, but grace coming after, upon which we are to rely. Is it not an unavoidable result of such a view of the provisions of the Gospel, to lead us to trust to our own strength—to look within ourselves for the sources of success? If it be safer to trust in an arm of flesh than in the almighty arm of Christ; if it be more conducive to perseverance and victory, to go forth to battle with the "world, the flesh and the devil," armed with the constancy of our own wills, the steadfastness of our own purposes, the ardor of our own feelings, the iron of our own nerves, than in the panoply of God, and the strength of the Lord Christ, then—but not until we are

thus persuaded—do we, so far as the present objection goes, acquit the doctrine before us, of injurious tendencies.

There is another aspect in which this objection may be viewed. Let us be made to feel that the assistance of God's efficient grace is dependent on our fidelity, and will we not feel, that a part, at least, of the credit of our perseverance and success accrues to us? Humility may indeed say, that it all belongs to God who gave the assistance without which our efforts would have been fruitless: but will not pride contend, that without our fidelity the assistance would not have been given; so that it was our fidelity which secured the assistance; and, although without grace our efforts would have been in vain, yet without our continued fidelity, grace would have been in vain? The advantage in the argument being so clearly with pride, what heart, what human heart would resist the rising spirit of self-complacency, self-confidence, self-righteousness?

We are aware that it is claimed for this doctrine, that it tends to make men more humble, watchful and diligent. We believe that if examined in its principles, it will be found to produce the very contrary effect—to engender and foster a spirit of self-gratulation for the success that may have attended efforts which have been made, and of self-reliance for duties and dangers to come. We might appeal to facts, and ask—do we find those holding the doctrine, and who receive the full benefit of a firm persuasion of its truth,---do we find them more humble, circumspect, uniform, persevering in their walk; less liable to fall into sin, to backslidings and apostacy; less variable in the tenor of their piety, less confident of their own strength, less boastful of their attainments---than other christians?--- Where are the fruits of the salutary influence of the doctrine? In what parts of the church are they to be seen? We utter what has impressed itself upon our mind, as the result of no small attention devoted to the subject, that a comparison drawn from an enlarged observation of the relative states of the christian bodies, in which this doctrine is held and in which it is not held, will show that it has imparted to the piety of the former, characteristics the very reverse of humility, self-distrust, stability and perseverance. Not that we ascribe the entire effect to the one doctrine, but to the joint influence of this and other doctrines, from which it is inseparable. So far, however, as it has any influence, and we do not account its influence small, we believe it to be as described, and therefore, must hold the doctrine to be "dangerous and demoralizing" in its tendencies."

VI. In close connection with the preceding objection, yet sufficiently distinct from it, and important enough to justify a separate consideration, we remark that the doctrine of "Falling from Grace" tends to disparage the scriptural method of justification before God.

In order to present this objection in a clear light, we premise the following propositions, in regard to which there is no controversy among evangelical christians:---That the only ground, upon which we can be justified, is on account of the righteousness of Christ, becoming available to us, through the instrumentality of faith alone;—That this method of justification is sufficient and complete in itself, admitting neither a substitute nor aid, from any source, or of any kind;—That it is essential, alike to holiness in this life and to salvation in the life to come;—That, inasmuch as it denies to our works, all merit in deserving, and all efficacy in procuring salvation, it is opposed by the human heart, and will be opposed so long as there shall remain in the heart any pride to be offended and humbled. These propositions being admitted, the following inferences must also be allowed: That any doctrine which precludes our justification, will preclude our sanctification, and any, which obscures our views of the true ground of justification, or to any extent diverts the mind from it, to other grounds, must weaken the force of this great truth of the Gospel upon our hearts and lives, and in so far, retard the progress of sanctification in the soul. Further, that the heart, until wholly sanctified, is ever inclined to embrace such doctrines as will supercede or disparage a plan of salvation so humbling to its pride, as that of the gospel, and that to encourage the heart in its inclination to error, or to afford it a plausible pretext for it, is "dangerous and demoralizing."

The question to be now decided is—Does the doctrine of "falling from grace" tend to any of the results above condemned? We shall not insist upon what has ever appeared to us, as an *inherent incompatibility* between this doctrine and the scriptural method of justification, on account of the righteousness of Christ. It will suffice, for the present purpose, to show that the former tends to encourage the heart in its opposition to the latter, and to lead it to place an undue reliance upon the merit and efficacy of our own works. This, we think, will be evident, if we look narrowly into the doctrine itself. It supposes that the christian

may lose his justification, and of this loss, his sins—either those of commission or those of omission—are the cause. Had he maintained his good works, he would have remained in his justified state. Failing in them, he failed in this. By his works he stood; by his works he fell—his good works in the one case, his evil works in the other. How natural the inference, that his good works must have had some immediate agency, either meritorious or efficacious, in *procuring* that which they have such an essential agency in *maintaining*, and the *loss of which* is the direct consequence of a *failure in them.* When we observe that a continuance of light is always contemporaneous with the continuance of the sun in the heavens above, and that darkness ever ensues upon his retiring behind the horizon, we conclude without further enquiry, that it was his rising which diffused the beams of morning over the world.—Keeping before us the fact, that a plan of salvation in which our works shall have, at least, *some* meritorious or efficacious part, is such a plan as the heart naturally loves and ardently seeks, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion, that, if the continuance of justification depend upon the continuance of our good works, and the failure in our works causes the loss of our justification, our works in some way, must have originally procurred our justification. Any connexion between our works and justification which involves the first consequence, would appear necessarily to involve the last. Even were it possible, by some attenuated metaphysical distinction, to evade this conclusion in theory, still, if, as we are persuaded must be the case, it should be practically adopted and acted upon, the result will be the same as though it were formally recognised.

Let the sinner, enquiring what he must do to be saved, be taught to believe, that all the righteousness which he can obtain, is one which his own works will maintain or his own works will forfeit, and will he not seek a righteousness such as his works may procure for him? The consequence will be—either he will relinquish all concern on the subject of his salvation through despair of succeding in it, after the repeated failures to which his misdirected efforts must inevitably lead: or, he will settle down upon some false ground of confidence, and live and die, perhaps, and go before God in judgment, with no better righteousness than one which his own hands have wrought. These are not results supplied by imagination, nor do we offer them simply as those which might be

expected in the cases supposed. There are multitudes of both classes, in every part of the land, and it becomes a question of supreme importance, what has induced an error so common and so fatal? How comes it, that the unqualified promise of our Savior, securing salvation to all who seek it, has not been fulfilled in behalf of the classes just designated? We need go no further back, in searching for an answer to this enquiry, than to the fact, which stands conspicuously upon its threshhold, that they sought salvation, not in the righteousness of Christ, but in the merit and efficacy of their own works. "Going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And in this error, so natural to the human heart, they were encouraged, and perhaps, confirmed, by a system of doctrine which sets forth prominently the opinion, that all the righteousness which the sinner can obtain is a righteousness which, to-day, may be his—on to-morrow, may be lost—on the next day may be recovered—to be again lost, or maintained to the end, just as his good works or evil works shall preponderate.

Let the christian be taught to believe, that there is such a connection between his justification and his works as renders the continuance of *that* contingent on the constancy of *these*, and the effect, though less disastrous, will still be highly detrimental to his growth in grace and religious enjoyment. If he be ignorant, as many in too great a degree are, of his own heart and of the spirituality and extent of the requirements of the divine law, and be, yet, enabled to maintain a fair christian deportment, and enjoy, in a comfortable measure, the manifestations of God's favor, he will naturally ascribe his success, in no small part, to his own fidelity and efforts. It will be almost a miracle, if, in the progress of his self-complacency, he does not become vainly "puffed up" with empty conceits of his own high attainments in holiness. One more step taken, and he will be ready to set up the arrogant claim of "entire sanctification"—"sinless perfection"—a sentiment than which, if we form our judgment, either from the warnings of the Bible against the dangers of presumption, or from the experience of the world, it would be difficult to find one, that has ever been promulged under the name of christianity, more fruitful of mischief to christian character. Or, if he be better informed as to his own heart and the requirements of the law, he will be subjected to continual distrust and dejection. He can enjoy,

if at all, the hopes of his profession only under such an excited condition of the feelings, as will divert the mind wholly from the contemplation of itself. These seasons are necessarily infrequent and temporary, and they are always followed by a corresponding reaction. When the soul emerges from them, to find, that it has no more stable foundation to repose its hopes upon, than a righteousness which, if not constructed of its own inconstant, transient and imperfect "frames" and exercises, is yet to be upheld and perpetuated by them, it will be again harrassed with doubts and involved in still deeper darkness. A state of mind is thus induced which is not only incompatible with religious enjoyments, but also deprives the subject of it of the encouragements to persevere in holiness which are most needful to its growth in grace. Let the christian, thoroughly acquainted with himself, remember the holiness of God before whom he must stand in judgment, and the purity of heaven which he seeks; and he can possess solid peace and joyful assurance, only whilst he looks beyond himself and his miserable works, and fastens the eye of faith, intently and exclusively, upon the complete righteousness and unchanging love of Christ.

Being constrained to think that the doctrine of falling from grace, whether it be considered in its principles, or in its practical operation on the mind of the christian or the unconverted man, tends to impugn the scriptural method of justification, there is no alternative left us, but to pronounce it "dangerous and demoralizing." Though justification and sanctification are not identical, they are yet inseparable. An error, as already remarked, which precludes the one, precludes the other. And a doctrine which tends to foster erroneous views of the former, though it should not be wholly precluded, will impair the latter, though it should not be entirely prevented.

We are aware of an objection that may be started in connection with the foregoing views. It may be said that we have put the cause for the effect; and that it is *erroneous views of justification which have given rise to the idea of falling from grace.* Originally this was, doubtless, the order in which they stood in relation to each other, and thus they now stand in that stupendous system of error and delusion—the Roman apostacy—in which both had their birth, and in those sections of the

church which are most nearly allied to the modern "Babylon."* The doctrine of falling from grace, however, is still held in some churches, whose creeds dissent, emphatically, from the Romish doctrine of justification by works, and teach, with considerable clearness, the protestant doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ. It is upon such churches, that we maintain the effects of the doctrine are manifested. They may be seen, in the instructions which are given to those enquiring the way of life. They may be seen, in the details which are given of the evidences of christian character and experience. They may be seen, in the self-confidence and spiritual pride of those arrogating superior and perfect sanctity. They may be seen in the distresses and gloom of the humble, yet watchful and timid child of grace. They may be seen in the bold, fearless, presumptuous assurance, in the dying hour, of those who, whilst living, furnished least evidence of piety, and in the distrust and apprehension, in that hour, of others whose living piety had been most exemplary. A doctrine whose tendency is, to give confidence to those who already possess too much, and deprive those of it who most need it; to make the proud, arrogant, and the humble, despondent; to exalt human merit, and depreciate that of the Savior—can it be otherwise than "dangerous and demoralizing?"

Finding that we have already transcended the limits we had wished to observe on this occasion, we shall conclude with a simple recapitulation of the prominent points already placed before you. We object, then, to the "doctrine of falling from grace," because it tends to impair respect

* It would apppear to the writer, that an intelligent and candid examination of the principles of the doctrine under review would show, that it logically belongs to a different system of doctrines from that of the Protestant Church and of which the leading idea is "salvation by grace," in opposition to "salvation by works." That it was held in the Roman Church at the time of the reformation,—although we may not be able to designate the precise period of its introduction—we know from the Anathema pronounced by the Council of Trent, 1545, '63, against any who should deny it. The Reformed Churches of Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, England and Scotland all rejected it, as contravening the free grace of God.—With other errors inseparable from it, it was first rather covertly introduced into the Reformed Church by Von Harmen, or Arminius, and afterwards more openly advocated by Episcopius, about 70 or 80 years after the Reformation; but was distinctly condemned as contrary to the protestant faith in 1618-19 by the Synod of Dort, composed of the most eminent Divines from the various parts of the Reformed Church. The doctrine, soon after, spread extensively through the English church, under the auspices of Archbishop Laud and his semi-popish compeers; and will be found to have prevailed there and elsewhere, in a general ratio to the degree, in which the doctrine of "justification by faith" has been superceded, by that of justification by works, of "bamtismal regeneration," and similar errors.—[See Neal's History of the Puritans, also, Toplady's "Church of England Vindicated."

for the character of God, as sovereign in the dispensation of His favors, unlimited in His resources, invincible in His undertakings, unchangeable in His purposes: Because it tends to impair confidence in the completeness and sufficiency of the offices and works of Christ, by representing them as inadequate, either by or without design, to the infallible accomplishment of their ends: Because it tends to impair confidence in the Holy Spirit, as guide and sanctifier, by supposing Him liable, either to be defeated in His objects, or diverted from them: Because it makes its appeals, first and mainly, to motives and principles, which are less suitable and efficacious, than those which the Gospel addresses as the grand incentives to perseverance in holiness: Because it would direct the soul from the proper and only efficient sources of strength and perseverance, to other and fallacious ones: Because it obscures the scriptural method of justification on account of the righteousness of Christ, by the connection it would establish between our justification and the merit or efficacy of our own works. The truths and provisions of the Gospel, which it thus tends to disparage and injure, are the very "foundations," and form the very materials, of christian faith and practice. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Destroy respect for the character of God—and His entire moral government is unhinged, disjointed, dissolved. Atheism, anarchy, darkness and ruin make up the world.* Let the faintest breath of suspicion fall upon the offices and works of Christ— and the glorious scheme of redemption vanishes like the delusive mirage of the desert—the eye of the sinner turned to calvary to behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, is struck blind with disappointment—the hand, stretched out to grasp the cross as the sheet anchor of the sinking soul, is palsied with despair—the heart, throbbing to embrace the Savior in its confidence and love, feels its warm affections chilled and frozen, in death, at the fountain.—Awaken the slightest distrust of the faithfulness and efficacy of the blessed Spirit--and we are left as a vessel, swung from her moorings and driven without compass or pilot, upon the wide sea—the vault above showing neither sun, moon nor star—the horizon around, a girdle of

* It is a remark of Witsius applying with great force to the relative moral tendencies of the doctrines of the "perseverance of the saints," and "falling from grace," that "as the highest aim and attainment of religion are to glorify God, the doctrine which tends most to display the glory of His attributes and works, must conduce in the greatest degree to the promotion of piety."

storms—the billows, on every side, thick-studded with breakers. Displace gratitude and love, as the grand incentives to holy obedience, and substitute for them, selfishness and fear—and you repress every high and ennobling aspiration of the soul—and what with the manacles, you have put on his limbs, and the lash, you hold over his head, and the terror, you have filled his heart with, you have degraded the christian from the conscious dignity, the affectionate confidence and ready obedience of a son and heir, to the tame, reluctant, heartless submission of the bondman. Teach men that the sources of their strength and fidelity, or the grounds of their acceptance before God, lie in their own bosoms, rather than in the sovereign and unchanging love of the Father, the perfect righteousness and unfailing grace of the Son, and the ever abiding presence and sanctifying power of the Spirit—and you set them upon the hopeless task of building a tower of their own works and merit, by which they may ascend to heaven; and though, if christians, they will be conducted thither in a way they know not, you subject them, while on the way, to endless alternations of pride and self-righteousness, on the one hand, and of distress and despondency on the other---of pride and self-righteousness, while they feel that their efforts are successful and their work grows apace---of distress and despondency, when, as often it will be, they find their labor has all been in vain, for some wind of temptation---some wave of passion has prostrated the object of their fondest hopes and laid it low in the dust.

We shall not be understood, as affirming, that the doctrine of falling from grace, as held in some portions of the church, actually produces all these fatal results. Our meaning is, that it *tends toward them*---that its influence, be it greater or less, is in *the direction of them.* The more tenaciously it is adhered to, the more zealously it is proclaimed, the more consistently it is carried out, the more fully, of course, its tendencies will develope themselves. And were it not, that the tendencies of the doctrine, as a matter of faith, are controlled, in part, by other---conflicting, indeed, but more scriptural---views of truth, and its actual effects upon the conduct, restrained by that very grace of God, which it so much disparages, we verily believe, that it would overthrow the entire system of faith and holiness, which specifically constitute the Gospel, and open wide the door for the influx of infidelity and licentiousness.

Let us then, my brethren in the ministry and christian friends, who receive a different doctrine, and, as we are persuaded, a better, more scriptural, salutary and safe, cherish it with more thankful fondness, rely upon it with more joyful assurance, advocate it with more boldness and zeal, and honor it with a more consistent deportment. "It is no arrogant stoutness; it is our faith. It is no pride; it is devotion. It is no presumption; it is God's promise." "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

APPENDIX.

Having, in the foregoing discourse, mentioned, incidentally, the advantage in point of moral tendency, which the doctrine of the "Perseverance of the Saints" possesses, over that of "Falling from Grace," we shall here append some remarks in vindication of the former, from some of the charges that are brought against it.

The whole discourse, indeed, may be regarded as establishing, so far as the arguments are sound, the salutary tendencies of the doctrine—for, if the doctrine of falling from grace be dangerous and demoralizing in its tendencies, the opposite of that must possess the opposite attributes and lead to opposite results. One or two objections to the doctrine it may be proper to notice more particularly.

1. *It is said that the doctrine is a licentious one.*

In reply to this, we might make our appeal to the history of the church, and cheerfully abide the issue. Religion has never appeared in more lovely forms, nor exerted upon individual piety and public morals, a more decisive and sanctifying influence, than in countries, communities and times, where and when this and the *kindred* doctrines have been preached and most zealously insisted upon. We might cite in proof, Geneva, in the palmy days of her rigid Calvanism, England, in the times of the civil revolution, of the Westminister Assembly, &c., Scotland, New England, the Valley of Virginia, certain parts of North Carolina, and other places where the same doctrines have been generally received. Writes an *Arminian*, who spent some time in Geneva, fifty years after the death of Calvin, and whilst the savour of that great and godly man remained yet fresh in that city,—"What I have seen there I shall never forget. * * * Oh, how beautiful an ornament to christianity is this purity. If the difference of doctrine did not separate me from Geneva, the harmony of its morals could have induced me to remain there forever." (Dr. Merle D'Aubigne's Lutheranism and Reform.) The author to whom we are indebted for this quotation, remarks, in the same connection, "Ah, who could fail to understand what Montesquieu—the most profound politician of the eighteenth century—said, that the Genevese ought to bless and celebrate the day when Calvin was born, and that of his arrival in their midst." Can the community be found where the introduction and preaching of the doctrine before us and of that system of doctrine to which it necessarily belongs, produced a deterioration of public morals or brought down the standard of piety in the church?—History informs us of none such. But does it not refer us to some, in which the decline of these doctrines and the prevalence of the opposite, have been followed by a decline of piety, and the prevalence of immorality? If it were necessary, examples of the latter kind might be adduced almost without number. The objection is not founded in truth upon the verdict of experience.

The objection may seem to have some plausibility, so long as the nature of the christian character is kept out of view, but when that is presented in its true light, the objection is seen to involve a contradiction and absurdity. Who is it that "perseveres?" The "saint" alone. And what is the saint? He is one that loves God supremely. Will he love God the less, because God has secured to him the certain possession of eternal life? He is one that is "dead to sin." "How can he live any longer therein?" He is one that "hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness." How can he cherish sin when its effect is to prevent the gratification of his most ardent desire? If it were so, that the saint loves sin more than he loves God, is alive to sin and dead to holiness, and hungers and thirsts after sin, instead of righteousness, the objection would be valid, and the doctrine lead to licentiousness. As it is, however, there is a moral impossibility that the "saint," who alone is supposed to persevere, should be injured by the doctrine. "The offer of grace may be abused, the possession of grace cannot be." The possession is a safeguard to the proper use. The man, who wishes under any circumstances, to live in sin, must wish it, because he loves sin. The man who loves sin, cannot be a saint. It is sometimes said by those who reject the doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints," that if they "believed it, they would live as they please." To this, it is a sufficient reply, to remark, that if they are saints, they will "be pleased" to persevere in holiness; and if they are not saints, they are already living "as they please," and that without believing the doctrine. What would be thought of the honesty of the man who should avow, that if he were certain that he would escape detection, he would commit frequent depredations upon the property of his neighbors? We can just as readily conceive of an *honest* man making such a declaration as we can of a *christian* saying, "if he believed in the perseverance of the saints, he would commit sin whenever he pleased." As we have no confidence in the honesty, which is inspired by a fear of detection, so we have none, in the piety which is prompted by a fear of hell. Let it be remembered, that it is the saint alone that perseveres, and what the saint is, and the objection vanishes at once. If more correct views of the nature of true religion prevailed, there would be less objection to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints—less *necessity* for the opposite doctrine of falling from grace, and fewer *reported* exemplifications of it, in actual life.

The following remarks of Toplady dispose of this objection in a most summary manner: "It is neither licentious nor absurd, to suppose, 1st, that the truly righteous are the peculiar care of God. And 2d, that being His peculiar care, they are kept by His power through faith unto salvation; so kept as to be preserved fruitful in every good word and work. Now if to persevere in every good word and work be the turnpike to licentiousness, then I grant that the doctrine of perseverance is a licentious doctrine. When holiness and sin are one and the same thing, then, but not until then, will continuance in the former open a door to the latter."

2. *It is objected to this doctrine, that it tends to make christians careless and remiss in their religious duties.* This objection is so nearly akin to the one just noticed, that the answer given above will apply in all its parts. Like the other, it is founded on a misapprehension of the nature of the doctrine itself. It is not held, that a christian will be saved, whether he use the means appointed, or neglect them: but that the christian will persevere in the use of those means. *It is a perseverance in holiness, and of course in the means of holiness*, for which we contend. In the language of the distinguished Dr. Witherspoon in his "Essay on Justification by Faith"—"It will be acknowledged by all, without exception, that a believer's security, and the impossibility of his falling from grace, is a security of his not sinning, that is, of not being under the dominion of sin, as much as, or, rather, in order to his security of deliverance from the wrath of God. His pardon is sure, but this security is only hypothetical, because his faith and holiness are secured by the promise of God; so that, to suppose a person to sin without restraint, by means of the persuasion that his salvation is secured by his first acceptance of Christ, is a supposition self-contradictory. However strongly any man may assert that a believer's salvation is secure, he will not scruple at the same time to acknowledge, that if such believer should sin wilfully and habitually, and continued to do so, he would be damned; but he will deny that any such case ever did, or ever can possibly happen."

Of the same tenor, are the following judicious remarks of Dr. Russell of Dundee, in his letters on the "Nature and tendency of the Gospel:" "Perseverance can never mean simply an arbitrary connection between two distant and distinct things. The very term signifies continuance in a particular course. The way which leads from any place to the capitol of a kingdom will conduct the traveller to it, provided he persevere in his journey---but not otherwise. It is not enough that he enter on the road, and for a little, walk in it; he must continue in it, otherwise he can never reach the place of his destination. In like manner, christian perseverance does not mark an arbitrary connection between faith on our first coming to Christ, and the prize of eternal life in heaven; it connects these two by means of the whole intermediate course. The scriptures say "the righteous shall hold on his way," not that he shall get safe to his journey's end, let him wander which way he pleases.—False notions on this subject join together a beginning and an end, and leave the intervening space to be filled up as the sinful heart may incline. Perseverance is thus considered as a mere continuance in safety. How opposite is this to the truth! The *word*, as I have said, is expressive of contined progress, with a view to a particular end. What is it, then, to persevere, but to continue to walk in the same course on which we have entered? And if so, no person can take comfort from the doctrine, properly understood, who is not himself, at the time, persevering in faith and obedience. In this way only can we enjoy the blessing of salvation."

The foregoing quotations are so explicit and satisfactory as to render it unnecessary to say any thing further, in answer to the objection under review.

There are other objections to the doctrine of falling from grace which we have not space to answer in detail. The great majority of them, however, are so fully met by an unknown author, and his remarks are so pointed and brief, that we cannot forbear quoting them.

The question is not, whether true believers ever fall into sin. It is admitted that they do. A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again."—Proverbs XXIV: 16.

The question is not, whether persons who profess religion and appear to possess it, may fall away and perish. That this is sometimes the case is evinced by observation and the word of God.

The question is not, whether true believers, considered in themselves merely, are in *danger* of final apostacy. It is admitted, that if God has not promised to keep them, there is no certainty of their perseverance.

The question is not, whether a true saint who falls into sin, will be saved if he should die impenitent. It is undeniable, that no person, whether a saint or sinner, can be pardoned without repentance. The point at issue is, whether a true saint will be suffered to fall and die impenitent.

The question is not, whether a true believer will be saved whether he endure to the end or not. It is certain that those only will be saved who shall endure to the end. The point which I maintain is, that all true believers will endure to the end.

The question is not, whether saints will persevere without their own exertions. This is evidently impossible; as much so as it would be to run without moving. To persevere without their own exertions, would be to persevere without perseverance.

It is nothing to the purpose to show, that christians are commanded to persevere. The question is, whether they do or do not obey the command. Surely it is not sound reasoning to infer from a command, that those to whom it is given will disobey it.

Nor is it to the objectors purpose to show that saints are cautioned against apostacy. It becomes him to prove that these cautions will not be made effectual to prevent their apostacy.

Nor is it to his purpose to show, that the promises of salvation are conditional. He must show that some true believers will fail of complying with the conditions.